

Classroom Observation Tools

in 1 2 3 Steps



Monitoring effectiveness of classroom instruction

Think of classroom observation as a *calibration* exercise. Fruitful observation produces insights about and implications for every facet of a school or school system. Observation guides us in:

- Adhering to a shared, standards-aligned instructional framework for teaching and learning
- Understanding and faithfully implementing agreed-upon elements of the instructional framework
- Assessing consistency in practices among practitioners – for example, within and across grade levels/departments or content areas
- Gathering data about what's working well and what needs improvement to inform coaching, support, and professional development
- Gauging the impact of investments in curricular, assessments, and professional development on student learning, growth, and success
- Judging the efficacy of leadership decisions where it counts most: at the intersection of student, teacher, and content

Effective classroom observations – or walkthroughs – have a clearly defined focus. For example:

- A *learning walkthrough* typically focuses on a few instructional practices.
- An *implementation walkthrough* can provide evidence of how an educational investment, such as a new curriculum or PD offerings, impacts outcomes.
- A *leadership walkthrough* may illustrate how leadership actions are affecting teacher practice and student learning.

Of the countless classroom observation tools available to practitioners, Performance Fact recommends those that involve:

- Explicit statements about what we expect to see in the classroom (the practices or strategies being observed)
- Shared understanding of the observations criteria (a rubric, for example)
- Timely, actionable feedback, with a schedule for follow-up
- Mining all the observation data to infer major trends and implications for leadership action

Ultimately, classroom observations drive continuous improvement of the instructional core: how well the interaction of student, teacher, and content provide the outcomes we seek.

► *Recommended interval for the MONITOR AND ADJUST Classroom Observation Tools process: Every week*

STEP BY STEP

STEP
1

What do we expect to see?

- ◆ Professional practices and strategies to be observed

STEP
2

How will we calibrate what we see?

- ◆ Tools, protocols, processes for assessing the standards of practice in the classroom

STEP
3

How will we make sense of and act on what we see?

- ◆ Tools, protocols, processes for providing feedback, identifying trends within and across classrooms, and follow-up on recommendations